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INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY Panama

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SUBJECT Plans for National Pro-Peace Congress in Panama

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SUPPLEMENT TO
REPORT NO. 25X1X

1. Following the Panamanian Government action on 29 April outlawing Communism* and the subsequent raids on the headquarters of the Partido del Pueblo in Panama City and on the houses of some of the prominent members in Colon on 4 May, open Communist activity has declined considerably, including the preparations for the scheduled National Pro-Peace Congress 27-28 May. Headquarters for the Permanent Pro-Peace Committee has been at Calle Estudiante #110, Panama City. This has been the location for many of the meetings where propaganda plans have been discussed. As of 11 May no decision had been made whether an attempt would still be made to hold the Congress as scheduled, or what part the Partido del Pueblo would play in the plans from now on.
2. In March the Partido del Pueblo headquarters in David received instructions to organize its Peace campaign through the press publicizing the Peace Congresses held in Paris and Mexico and the ones to be held in the future. As indicated in the attachments, several organizations have been active in this campaign. Others have refused to cooperate. One of the latter, Sociedad Funeraria, is properly known as El Centro Cooperativa de Las Lomas, a purely civic organization not desiring to participate in any political activity, including the Pro-Peace movement.
3. Chiriqui En Marcha, mentioned as one of the supporting organizations, is a Socialist Party front, directed by Abel Candanedo who has been reported as a die-hard Socialist and since November 1949 has been active in rejuvenating the Socialist Party in Chiriqui Province. It was also reported that on 20 March a letter from Celso Solano, Secretary General of the Partido del Pueblo, suggested that Candanedo be given the leadership of the Partido del Pueblo in that province to add aggressiveness to its activities. Candanedo has also been referred to as the "undercover" leader of the Panamanian Communist Party.

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4. During April, several meetings were held at the Peace headquarters usually under the supervision of Cesar De Leon. Carlos Cajal and Carlos Luis Mendoza were charged with the task of gaining the support of the local and foreign civic organizations of a cultural and religious character. Mendoza said on 22 April that he had obtained a list of the Federation of Civic Societies which he said was very important because it could be used in direct negotiation in the campaign to increase the support of the National Peace Congress. In discussing the activities of the Partido del Pueblo, Cajal stated on 24 April that it was their duty, as "soldiers", to obey orders received from higher up and not discuss or criticize them. At a meeting on 2 May the impression among those present was that the Government action outlawing Communism had been premature because the Partido del Pueblo would hide all its important documents and go underground.**
5. One of the documents taken by the Panama Secret Police from the Partido del Pueblo headquarters was a mimeographed copy of "El Militante", a bulletin of political action of the Partido del Pueblo, edited by Hugo Victor, Secretary of Propaganda. This was the first issue and is dated 9 March 1950.
6. Below are some of the statements from this bulletin, which served to notify the party members of future actions to be taken:

"A true militant works daily effecting political action which consists of bring to the attention of the masses and orienting thought in accordance with the party line. A member of the Partido del Pueblo must at all times work against imperialism and the enemies of the working classes. On receipt of "El Militante" it is the duty of the individual in charge of Cell propaganda to notify the Secretary General when the next meeting of the Cell will take place. On leaving that meeting each Cell member should know his duties and obligations. If each Cell member and Cell fulfills the tasks assigned, then we will have true militants."

"The Permanent Pro-Peace Committee of Panama has invited the Partido del Pueblo to the National Assembly for Peace to be held in Panama City the middle of May. Large numbers of persons noted for their patriotism will attend and several countries will send delegations. This Assembly will be significant because it will combine the most efficient methods for liberating the country from the warmongers and will declare to the world that no Panamanian, no worker, will defend the Yankee canal in case the Yankee Imperialist starts a world catastrophe. The Permanent Pro-Peace Committee has planned the mobilization of 50,000 adherents to the National Peace Assembly. Let us (the Partido del Pueblo) prove that we have the sympathy of the masses, that we can mobilize. Our job of collecting signatures of peace adherents will give us the chance to agitate among great numbers of masses. The Partido del Pueblo will show that nothing can succeed when it goes contrary to Party action."

7. Among the tasks allotted the Partido del Pueblo in this issue of "El Militante" were the following:

"The National Secretary of Propaganda will send messages of solidarity to the National Peace Assembly from each of the Cells."

"The various individuals in charge of propaganda will check daily the signature sheets of the members to see whether they are getting their quotas."

"The Secretary of Organization will see to it that the members attend the meetings and discuss the orders set forth in this bulletin. The Secretary of Propaganda and Secretary of Finance will study those individuals adhering to the Peace Movement to see which ones will make good members of the Partido del Pueblo."

"Each person who signs the Peace pledge is a probable member of the Partido del Pueblo."

8. During March and April, Bernardo Jose Rogelio Dominguez, commonly known as Rogelio Sinan, was making trips through Central America to contact or organize various cultural groups of so-called liberal intellectuals. Sinan is president of the Permanent Pro-Peace Committee in Panama and has been a poet, teacher and writer associated with Pro-Soviet intellectuals. He was the principal

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founder of the Communist infiltrated Organizacion Panamena de Ayuda a la Republica Espanola (OPARE), an anti-Franco group organized to help Spanish exiles and oppose Panamanian recognition of Franco Spain. Sinan returned to Panama the first week in May.

*Cf. [REDACTED] 25X1A

**Panamanian Secret Police were reported to have seized records of the Partido del Pueblo 4 May 1950.

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